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GERMAN PREPOSITIONS

ACCUSATIVE

DATIVE

GENITIVE

German grammar : accusative dative genitive prepositions

Prepositions

- Accusative Case
- Nominative Case
- Dative Case
- Genitive Case

The relationships prepositions show can be physical:

- The mouse is **under** the table.
- I'm walking **into** a shop.

Or they can be more philosophical:

- I'm looking **forward to** the summer holiday.
- He believes **in** God.

Prepositions are sometimes known as **trigger words**.

This is because whenever you use a preposition it 'triggers'

a change in the item immediately afterwards.

Accusative prepositions

The following prepositions 'trigger' the accusative:

Prepositions or 'triggers'

Preposition	Translation
für	For
um	Around/for/at (time)
durch	Through
gegen	Against
entlang	Along
bis	Until
ohne	Without
wider	Against

To help you remember them, notice that when you spell out the first letter of each word in the table above it reads 'fudge bow'.

Examples

- Arsenal spielt gegen eine europäische Mannschaft -> Arsenal is playing against a European team.
- Wir sind durch den alten Markt gelaufen -> We walked through the market.
- Ich interessiere mich für moderne Technologie -> I'm interested in modern technology.

Dative prepositions

The following prepositions 'trigger' the dative.

To help you remember them you can sing them to the tune of the beginning of Good King Wenceslas.

Prepositions or triggers

Preposition	Translation
aus	From/out of
bei	At/at the house of
mit	With
nach	To (a place)/after/past (time)
seit	Since/for (time)
von	From
zu	To
gegenüber	Opposite
außer	Except for

- zu + dem = zum
- zu + der = zur
- von + dem = vom

Examples

- Meine Mutter kommt aus einem kleinen Dorf -> My mum comes from a little village.
- Ich studiere Deutsch seit vielen Jahren -> I've been learning German for many years.
- Meine Schwester tanzt mit ihrer besten Freundin -> My sister dances with her best friend.

Mixed prepositions

The following prepositions can 'trigger' the accusative or the dative.

Prepositions or triggers

Preposition (accusative trigger)	Translation
an	On-vertical
auf	On-horizontal, upon
hinter	Behind
in	In/into

Preposition (dative trigger)	Translation
neben	Next to/beside
über	Over/above
unter	Under/among
vor	In front of/before/to (time)
zwischen	Between

- an + dem = am
- in + dem = im
- in + das = ins

English sentences

- I am sitting between my parents -> I am sitting still.
- I sit down between my parents -> I am moving from standing up to sitting between my mum and dad.
- I am in the book shop -> I am inside the shop all the time.
- I am going in(to) the book shop -> I am moving from outside into the book shop.
- The mistletoe is hanging over my head -> It isn't moving about – it's hanging still.
- The plane flew over the house -> It moved from elsewhere to over the house.

All the prepositions in this list can behave like this:

- They can be used to talk about something's position where it does not move from one place to another.
- They can be used to talk about something's position where it moves from elsewhere into that position.
- Where there is place to place movement, the prepositions trigger the accusative.
- Where there is no place to place movement, the prepositions trigger the dative.

Examples

- * Ich gehe in die Stadt -> I'm moving from place to place -> accusative (I go into town).
- " Ich bin in der Stadt -> I'm staying in same place -> dative (I am in town).
- Ich klebe ein Poster an die Wand -> Poster moving from place to place -> accusative (I'm sticking a poster onto the wall).
- Es gibt ein Poster an der Wand -> Poster staying in same place -> dative (There's a poster on the wall).
- Er läuft zwischen seine Freunde -> Friends are staying still, he's moving between and past them -> accusative (He's walking between his friends).
- Er läuft zwischen seinen Freunden -> They're all walking, so in relation to the friends, he's in same place -> dative (He's walking between his friends) to the friends, he's in same place.

Genitive prepositions

The following prepositions 'trigger' the genitive.

Prepositions or 'triggers'

Preposition	Translation
(an)statt	Instead of
trotz	In spite of
außerhalb	Outside
während	During
innerhalb	Inside
wegen	Because of

Examples

- Während der Woche darf ich nicht ausgehen -> During the week I'm not allowed out.
- Ich bin wegen des Wetters nicht gegangen -> I didn't go because of the weather.
- – Ich wohne außerhalb der Stadt -> I live outside the town.

Common mistakes made by English speakers

- Not learning what case follows each preposition.
- Not knowing whether to use dative or accusative with mixed preposition.

More lessons:

- **Learn German / articles / definite and indefinite**
- **Learn German / Accusative Case**
- **Nominative Case / Definition and Examples**
- **Dative Case**
- **Genitive Case**
- **personalpronomen im dativ**
- **German Two-Way Prepositions – Wechselpräpositionen**
- **German article der die das**